United Nations E/CN.6/2007/NGO/33

# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
12 January 2007

Original: English

**Commission on the Status of Women**
**Fifty-first session**
26 February-9 March 2007
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child**

## Statement submitted by the Legião da Boa Vontade, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

06-68741 (E) 260107

**Statement**

Contributing to the 51st Commission on the Status of Women, the Legião da Boa Vontade – LBV (Legion of Good Will – LGW), a Brazilian civil society organization with general consultative status at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), submits its recommendations and best practices in dealing with the main theme "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child", to be discussed between 26 February to 9 March of 2007, at the United Nations Headquarters, in New York.

One of the most ancient forms of violation of gender committed in all societies, without a doubt is the violence against the girl-child. An abusive act that does not see social class, income, culture or ethnics. It is a complex problem manifested in different ways, and most of the times at home. Violence that can cause physical, sexual, and/or psychological suffering, moral and/or patrimonial damage, and, in the last case, death.

In the literary essay "Gospel of Sex", the journalist, radiobroadcaster and writer José de Paiva Netto, President of the LGW, affirms: "The crimes committed in the field of sexuality, in virtue of the human-spiritual instability, are a disease to be cured in the core of society. (...) Each person is unmistakably responsible for his or her acts before God, society and his/her own consciousness. We refer ourselves to the cowardly female trafficking; the commerce of Human Creatures; the sexual exploitation of children, youth, women and the girl child; to pedophilia; pornography; sexual harassment and so many other illnesses that need to be efficiently combated in a planetary scale. (...) It is necessary that the Human Being understands, definitely, that freedom infers responsibility, mainly in the field of Sex."

To understand this responsible freedom means to break off with the cycles of discrimination and violence perpetuated along the successive generations of a patriarchal society, in which the hierarchical structure is used as a form of oppression. In Brazil, one woman is beaten every 15 seconds. Seventy percent of the cases take place inside their homes. Besides this, only 10% of the Brazilian victims of violence file report. A research made in Brazil in 1998 by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), shows that domestic violence is the cause of one in every five absences of women at work. This makes Brazil lose annually 10.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), that is, approximately US$39 billion.

To expect the State to create changes for the resolution of the conflicts is not enough. The civil society needs to continue cooperating to reformulate its laws of global coexistence. And the Legion of Good Will, with initiatives directed specially towards the female universe, combats vehemently violence against women and the girl child. With these actions, the quality of life is reached by the rescue of self-esteem and the potentialities in the professional, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual fields.

Among the several actions carried out by the LGW on this issue, we point out the program Woman BEING: realization of educational lectures, workshops and job training courses that focus on the raise of the family income, offer guidance on women and girl child rights, prevention of

domestic violence and how to cultivate values which stimulate the harmony at home. Cases identified have juridical and psychological support with the help of professional volunteers. Besides all this, gathering groups stimulate the exchange of experiences and the search of solutions for the several levels of vulnerability, such as family planning and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STD).

One of the projects of this program is Baby-Citizen, which focuses on making the pregnant women aware of the importance of Love since the pre-natal phase, strengthening the affection bond between mother and child. The women participating in the project also receive complementary nourishment, support in all stages of pregnancy, orientation on breast-feeding and health, music therapy, besides first-aid and hygiene cares. The babies are taken care of since the mother's womb until the child makes through the most risky period of life, that is, until he/she reaches one year of age. All this work helps develop the autonomy of women and family cohesion, and makes the probability of these children becoming victims of violence decrease considerably.

Another challenge that the LGW helps overcome in Brazil concerns the exploitation of child labor. According to data of DIEESE (Inter Trade Union Department of Statistics and Socio-Economic Studies), published recently by the International Labor Organization (ILO), Brazil is among the countries with the highest rates of child labor. According to the Ministry of Social Development, despite the constitutional prohibition of work for those under the age of 16, it is estimated that about 2.7 million boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 16, practice activities irregularly. To complement, a research made by IPEA (Institute of Applied Economic Research) showed that there are 300 thousand children, between the ages of 5 and 9, working in the country.

Carrying on, many times, activities on the streets, in agriculture or domestic chores, the children and adolescents are submitted to mistreatments, sexual exploitation and abuse. Another aggravating fact of this sad reality is the increase of the illiteracy rate due to the great number of boys and girls that work and drop out of school for lack of time. The contribution given by the LGW for the eradication of this situation are its Elementary, Intermediate and High Schools (full and part time), besides socioeducational, sportive, musical, artistic, cultural and recreational activities, guaranteeing to those assisted the complete development according to the Declaration of Rights of Children and Adolescents.

In all the actions that the Legion of Good Will accomplishes, it applies the Ecumenical Citizen Pedagogy, a differentiated methodology with quality, which aims at the spiritual biopsychosocial progress of the Human Being. Proposed by Paiva Netto, it promotes universal values such as Ecumenical Spirituality and Solidarity. Thence the motto of the LGW's teaching facilities be: "Here we study. Brain and Heart are formed", uniting intellect and feeling. "While efficient education, desired by all those of common sense, does not prevail, any nation will suffer the captivity of the limitations imposed upon itself", defends the director of the LGW.

In 57 years of existence, the Legion of Good Will has exported its social technologies, and its programs and projects are present in other countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay,

Uruguay, Portugal and the United States of America. According to recent research held by Toledo & Associados, about 86% of the over 4 million annual assistances given by the organization are directed towards people of the female gender. The focus of this action is clear and intentional. "If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family." This phrase of the great North American educator Charles McIver (1860-1906) — quoted by Paiva Netto in his article "Women fixing the Nations" — reflects the work of the Legion of Good Will. It appoints that for effective changes to be made in this scene of violence, it is not enough to act only in the protection of the victim. It is also necessary to educate and make the family aware, and, consequently, the society.

The omission before any type of violence practiced against a woman and a girl child is a crime that insults Humanity in its most elevated essence, for she represents the origin of life. And the LGW does not refer here only to the biological generation of the Being. Paiva Netto goes on: "Women are not public spittoons. They have to be respected and valorized for what they represent to all of Humanity." But, in order to do so, they have to understand their role on the Planet. As a citizen, any Human Being born receives civil, social, political rights and, as Paiva Netto defends, spiritual rights as well. By not respecting these rules, the individual switches to the preying side of collectivity. Upon understanding the other with respect and dignity that bestows him the value of citizen, the Human Being-individual shall understand his/her role in society. "Sentiments of mercy, Love, Solidarity are", as the President of the LGW declares, "levers that shall rise from the ruins (moral, social, political etc. ruins) the Solidary Society that is not a utopian dream, far less an ideology. It is a proposal that commingles in exercising transnational Fraternity, without racial, gender, religious or whatever other frontiers there may be. In the Solidary Society, the individual understands that the body is far more than matter. It is the vehicle for transforming actions, abolishing individualistic sentiments that cooperate for the degeneration of entire collectivities".

For the director of the Legion of Good Will, "the great mission of the LGW is, above all, educational: to elucidate the people about themselves, that is, to promote Education and Culture with Spirituality so there may be Food, Health and Work for all, in the formation of the Ecumenical Citizen."

This way, the Organization has joined forces to help Brazil fulfill the 8 Millennium Development Goals, launched by the UN, as well as the convention that determines the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and the girl child.

Beyond moral

The discussion on the theme is beyond the moralizing question; it is the reflex of the lack of spiritualized education of the mass. "If violence came out of the dark night, from the hidden places, and came to show itself in broad daylight, it is because it resides inside the human hearts. Existing in the souls and hearts, it will be present wherever the Human Being may be. (...) Great is the nation and wise the ruler that conciliates the values of his components of all races, creeds, political convictions... They are the builders of the true progress. It is worth mentioning that there will not be a good regime while Man is evil", points out Paiva Netto.

That is why the Legion of Good Will understands that it is necessary to have knowledge of the spiritual factors, in the analysis of the social facts like violence against women and the girl child, wars, crimes against the population and the nations, at last, in the search of the comprehension of the human logic. Only by this will Science be complete, as the President of the LGW declares: "There cannot be scientific studies of the human facts without doing the social research of the spiritual ones".

This rule can be applied for macro or micro processes, besides public and private plannings as well. Education, Politics, Religion and Science should be worked through the field of the Spirit, that is, of the sentiment transformed by the Law of Love, firmed on Jesus' New Commandment — "Love one another as I have loved you. Only by this shall you be recognized as my disciples, if you have the same Love for one another" (Christ's Gospel, according to John, 13: 34 and 35) —, symbol of eternal Love, which stimulates the constructive democratic-spiritual competence, and not the abuse of power. It is a proven experience, a strategy of planetary survival, in which the main exchange currency is not oil, nor the natural raw materials of a country, but, indeed, the culture of Peace, lived, defended and fostered by all the peoples.

United Nations E/CN.6/2007/NGO/34

# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
4 January 2007

Original: English

**Commission on the Status of Women**
**Fifty-first session**
26 February-9 March 2007
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child**

## Statement submitted by American Psychological Association, Anglican Consultative Council, Armenian International Women's Association, Associated Country Women of the World, Baha'i International Community, Catholic International Education Office, Christian Children's Fund, Dominican Leadership Conference, Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council of North and South America, Hadassah-Women's Zionist Organization of America, Human Lactation Center, International Alliance of Women, International Council of Jewish Women, International Council of Psychologists, International Federation of University Women, League of Women Voters of the United States, People's Decade of Human Rights Education, Perhaps Kids Meeting Kids Can Make a Difference, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Simply Help, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, Women's Federation for World Peace International, Women's Sports Foundation, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World ORT Union, Worldwide Organization for Women and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

06-68609 (E) 180107

**Statement**

We, Non-Governmental Organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC, reaffirm and call attention to the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of the girl child. We acknowledge the important step taken in Section L of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) in emphasizing the Girl Child. However, we are concerned that after more than a decade of policies, promises and programs the girl child remains powerless, neglected and invisible.

The fifty-first session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, with the theme "The Elimination of Discrimination and Violence Against the Girl Child", offers a unique opportunity for Member States to review progress, improve and accelerate policies and programmes designed to fulfill promises made at Beijing and beyond and to ensure all girls the full enjoyment of their human rights.

The recently released Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children reveals the severe and pervasive nature of the violence endangering the lives of girls on all continents. The root causes of violence, including negative cultural attitudes and practices, poverty and inadequate access to education and health services, create barriers for girls particularly in the form of discrimination, insecurity and disempowerment. These root causes highlight the need for a holistic, rights-based approach to ending discrimination and violence against girls. Of particular note is the need to acknowledge the role of men and boys in ending violence and discrimination against the girl child.

A girl continues to experience many of the worst human rights abuses throughout her life-cycle. She is too often denied her right to life, food, health, education or the freedom to choose her life partner and her life's work. She is repeatedly denied her political, economic, social and cultural rights and subjected to cultural and legally sanctioned behaviors that hinder her development and empowerment. Only a holistic approach grounded in a human rights framework, which considers the undeniable relationships of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural behaviors can effect the true elimination of discrimination and violence against girls. Indeed, this approach was recommended in a substantive assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action via the adoption of General Assembly resolution 60/141 at its sixtieth session.

We are encouraged by the commitments reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit, where Member States agreed to adopt comprehensive national strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the end of 2015. This agreement takes immediate steps toward saving and improving the lives of millions of people within the span of a few years. However, since gender equality is the essential underpinning for the achievement of all of the MDGs, the failure to call particular attention to the empowerment of the girl child will limit progress on all of the millennium goals and targets. Forging a link between women and girls in interpreting and monitoring all the MDGs and especially Goal 3 on women's empowerment, can be a strategy ensuring progress in eliminating discrimination and violence against the girl child and for achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals.

The international legal architecture for girls, mainly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), mutually reinforce the principals of gender equality. These mechanisms should be used to end the invisibility of the girl child by adopting reporting procedures that require State Parties to evaluate their existing laws and policies relating to the girl child and bring them in compliance with these international standards. Adequate resources for the implementation and enforcement of these laws will aid their effectiveness.

Better qualitative and quantitative research will help us all understand the realities of girls and how to reach them. We urge countries, international organizations and universities to conduct research about girls at risk of discrimination and violence. Further, data disaggregated by sex and age related to children in critical sectors inter alia health, education, labor and protection will assist in creating a gender perspective for the planning, implementation and monitoring of government programs.

The skills, ideas and energy of all girls are vital for the full attainment of the goals of gender equality, education, sustainable development and peace. Therefore, we urge Member States, international organizations, national and local governments to ensure that girls have the opportunity to be heard and that their views are valued and incorporated into discussions and decisions, especially into those areas which affect their lives most directly. Participatory mechanisms must be created to enable girls to speak out about the realities of their lives and to share their thoughts and experiences with government and civic leaders who make policy and plan programs. Active engagement fosters, respect and understanding and contributes to the process of empowerment and equality.

The participation of girls must become common practice if policies for social and economic development are to be truly sustainable.

United Nations E/CN.6/2007/NGO/35

# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
17 January 2007

Original: English

**Commission on the Status of Women**
**Fifty-first session**
26 February-9 March 2007
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child**

## Statement submitted by the International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

06-68752 (E) 190107

**Statement**

The International Federation of Women in Legal Careers (I.F.W.L.C.) is an international NGO founded in Paris in 1928, having consultative status with ECOSOC since 1961. It has affiliated national associations and individual members in 70 countries. The Federation's activities are inspired by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Federation's essential goals are the eradication of all discrimination against women and the promotion of Women's Human Rights.

I.F.W.L.C. assembled at its XIXth Congress in Barcelona, Spain, September 2006, considered the theme of discrimination as it affects both women and the girt-child, especially as it concerns their health, education and access to property. It concluded unanimously that violence against children has a direct deleterious impact on their education and their physical and mental health.

Genital Mutilation and Sexual Violence

I.F.W.L.C. considers both actual rape and the practices of child marriage an abhorrent form of sexual violence and, as such, should be criminalized. The Federation expresses deep distress over the traditional, customary practices against girls of Female Genital Mutilation or Excision, stressing that these practices are in themselves an act of violence against these girls and a violation of their fundamental right to life, security, freedom and health. It considers such practices a violation of Human Rights and demands a massive campaign of information and re-education in order to persuade parents not to submit their daughters to such practices.

Education of Girls

I.F.W.L.C. believes that families must be made aware that the education of young girls is one of the principal ways to emerge from poverty. Society must insure that girls, as well as boys, remain in school as long as possible so as to develop to their full potential. This will aid in the prevention of the pregnancy of minors, the incidence of disease and the prevalence of poverty. Educated girls are more employable and more aware of proper hygiene and knowledge of both the means of preventing unwanted pregnancies and the transmission of sexual diseases. Finally, education makes girls more adjusted to the demands of today's modern technological world.

Girls must be taught the importance of human rights and of the equality between men and women, and teacher-training should include these subjects. One essential requirement is that the schooling of girls be secular, mixed and obligatory (at least to age 16) and provided by teachers who are competent and well-trained to communicate their subjects; this includes an appreciation of the need to differentiate between the teaching of girls and boys.

Certain governmental policies are fundamental to the proper education of girls. Specific parts of the State Budget should be set aside for their education. Educational statistics should be broken down by gender in order to enhance the visibility of girls' education.

Health Care of Girls

The neglect of the appreciation of health care for girls is an indirect extension of violence, since it encroaches on the integrity of their female bodies. Civil society must provide, in some manner, funding for health care and health instruction at all levels of society, including public-funded campaigns addressing the prevention of disease, especially that of AIDS. General sex education should be mandatory in all schools. I.F.W.LC. encourages governments and other public entities of the world to include the teaching of the prevention of AIDS and general sexual information in their countries. Additionally, since the problem of AIDS is at an acute crisis level, the international community should find a way to criminally punish the behavior of those carriers of the disease who know they are infected and who continue to consort with their partners (legitimate or not). Also, the dissemination of misleading and incorrect AIDS information regarding its cure and/or prevention should be considered a criminal act and sanctioned as such.

It is obvious that the problem of violence against women and their children encompasses many elements that are major shortcomings of our society, and their alleviation is going to affect the general level of violence in our world.